

JOINT MEETING

Implementation Sub-Committee Of The Task Force on Federal Legislation Of the Children's Cabinet & Food Stamp Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 04, 2005

Meeting was called to order at 9:10 AM. Introductions were made. This meeting was unique in that both the Welfare Implementation Task Force and the Food Stamp Advisory Committee were in joint session.

1. FOOD STAMP ISSUES

Kathy Gorman, chair of the Food Stamp Advisory Committee, gave an overview of Food Stamp issues to the group to acquaint them with the specific perspective and concerns of the non public assistance recipients of Food Stamps.

Food Stamps is a nutrition program and as such it seeks to enroll all those who are eligible. There is a significant outreach aspect to Food Stamps. At present there is a significant percentage of the folks who are eligible for Food Stamps, particularly the elderly, who have not enrolled in the program. Outreach to the eligible not enrolled

populations includes radio infomercials, advertising on busses, informational enrollment meetings at elderly housing and senior centers. Outreach also includes efforts to educate community agencies about Food Stamps and to remove any stigma that may be attached to receiving Food stamps.

There is a need, however, to assure that outreach is targeted in order to not exacerbate error rates.

Robert McDonough presented on Food Stamp participation numbers. He noted that Food Stamp participation follows the unemployment rate. When the rate is up Food Stamp participation goes up and when the rate is down participation goes down.

For the past few years we have been able to waive the three month in every thirty six month time limit on Food Stamps for unemployed able bodied adults. This year most such recipients will be subject to this time limit.

The Food Stamp advertising campaign will occur in April and May and August and September. Radio stations that air the FS infomercials will be selected based on the demographics of their audience.

At present there is a Food Stamp self screening tool on the DHS Website. Soon there will be an interactive application for Food

Stamps accessible on the Web. It will accept an application and establish an application date. There will be a demonstration of the application in April. It will be available to those without home computers in Libraries and social service and health agencies. Staff at these sites will be trained to assist applicants and will be provided all necessary materials. Also, there will be an attempt to link Family Resource Counselors at health centers who assist with Rite Care applications with the Food Stamp application process.

A policy change will be effective April 1 that will exclude child support payment as income for the purpose of establishing eligibility for Food Stamps.

Nutrition education is funded as part of the Food Stamp program. Cooking demonstrations and nutrition information is being provided in DHS local offices as well as to child care providers and other program sites. In addition to teaching how to cook nutritious food information on how to stretch the food dollar is also provided.

With regard to legislation there are cuts in the Food Stamp in the President's budget. There is a bill in the state legislature requesting \$250,000 for outreach efforts. The \$250,000 will be matched by \$250,000 in Federal funds.

2. FOOD STAMP AND FIP DATA REPORT (UPDATE) – RANDY

ROSATI

Randy Rosati distributed the December 2004 Food Stamp ad hoc report. And highlighted some of the data for the group. There are 34,043 Food Stamp cases and of these 15,034 (44%) also receive FIP. About 21 % of those receiving FS have earned income. Forty four percent of FS recipients are one person households and 80% list English as their primary language. Food Stamp recipients ethnicity is 49.1% white, 23.2 % Hispanic, 13 % Black, 2.3% Asian, .2% American Indian and 12.2 % not reported . Over 47 % of FS recipients have a high school education or more. About 70% of FS recipients are between the ages of 20 and 49. Finally, there are 5,415 on SSI who are not receiving Food Stamps. Randy noted that in New York when people are determined eligible for SSI they are automatically determined eligible for Food Stamps.

Randy next reported on FIP data. As of the February there are 12,960 FIP cases, which is a drop of almost 200 cases from the end of 2004. Case openings are down by 100 cases between December 2004 and January 2005. There are 5944 exempt cases about the same as in December. About three or four individuals who had been convicted for drug sale and distribution have become eligible each month for FIP since August 2004 due to the recent change in rules. Childcare disregard cases continue to decline at 95 cases in October. FIP sanction cases continue to decline. The number of sanction remains about the same as the past few months with a total of 837 cases. It

was noted that there were about 3300 FIP participants whose activity was not reported. It was asked if the numbers in education and training could be reported.

3. FIP LEGISLATIVE ISSUES - LINDA KATZ

Those who attended the DHS legislative hearing reported that it went well. Pending legislation to change FIP rules allows a FIP recipient to enter short term training after their 24th of cash assistance if they have worked for 12 months during the first 24.

4. TANF REAUTHORIZATION

TANF was reauthorized to March 31, 2005. Possibilities for future action on TANF include another extension, act on reauthorization or go through the budget process.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM. Next meeting will be on April 1, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriella Barros